United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1667
16 June 1994

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Special Rapporteur for human rights in former Yugoslavia reports Bosnian Serb forces committed massive human rights violations in Gorazde; calls for UNPROFOR presence to monitor treatment of Serb minority in enclave.

+ Talks scheduled between Croatian government and Serb authorities in Plitvice today and tomorrow cancelled.

+ Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi continues talks aimed at achieving dialogue between parties and cease-fire in Yemen.

+ South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu speaking on Day of African Child says democracy and freedom important for children's quality of life.

+ UNAMIR cancels cease-fire talks in Kigali as mortar and small arms fire continued in and around capital.

+ Delegates in Vienna meet to consider the International Nuclear Safety Convention; IAEA Director-General, Hans Blix, says if nuclear power to be attractive energy option, safety is fundamental.

* * *

Bosnian Serb forces had committed massive human rights violations during their March/April offensive in the Central Bosnian town of Gorazde, according to the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the former Yugoslavia, Tadeusz Mazowiecki. In his report, Mr. Mazowiecki said it was clear war crimes had been committed in the enclave and the perpetrators must be bought to justice. The "fierce attack" on the enclave, declared a "safe area" by the Security Council last year, had caused government authorities to loose control of part of the territory. Civilian targets had been deliberately targeted and there had been interference with attempts to bring care to the wounded.

The Special Rapporteur noted that Bosnian government forces had also committed human rights violations, but not on the same scale as the Bosnian

(more)

Serbs. He also expressed concern over emerging animosity by local Muslims towards their Serb neighbours. He urged that the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) retain a strong presence in the enclave to reassure the local population, reduce risks of further attacks, and to monitor the treatment of the local Serb minority population.

* * *

Talks scheduled by the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) between the Croatian government and the Serb authorities in Plitvice today and tomorrow have been cancelled. ICFY Ambassador Kai Eide told correspondents in Zagreb that in spite of earlier agreements on all details of the planned talks, problems arose because of concerns by the Serb side in recent days.

Mr Eide said that he deeply regretted the decision by the Croat and Serb leaders not to go ahead with the talks. It was very important that after months of diplomatic efforts people who had been suffering as a result of the conflict and the economic breakdown see some progress. The mediators and the international community had done their utmost to get the negotiations started and still regarded the agreement by both sides to meet in Plitvice to be standing, he added.

* * *

Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, Head of the fact-finding mission to Yemen, held talks in Riyadh today with the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Saud Al-Faissal. Yesterday, he was in Sana'a where he had discussions with President Abdullah Saleh and later he met with senior officials, led by the acting Prime Minister, Mohamed Said Al-Attar. Also present at the second meeting were the Vice-Prime Minister, Abdel Wahab Al-Amssi, the Minister of Planning and Development, Abdel Kerim Al-Iryani, and Foreign Minister Mohamed Salem Basendwah.

During his meetings in Sana'a, Mr. Brahimi discussed a joint military commission to observe a cease-fire between the warring parties in Yemen. President Saleh said he was willing to develop good relationships with countries in the region, and also agreed to participate in the military commission meetings in either Damascus, Riyadh, Cairo or Rabat. President Saleh expressed his full support for Mr. Brahimi's and United Nations activities in Yemen. Mr. Brahimi described the talks as useful as regards starting a dialogue between the parties and a cease-fire.

In a related development, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) begun evacuating foreigners from Yemen today. An IOM ship left Aden carrying 900 nationals from Cuba, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Sudan, the Russian Federation, Tunisia, the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as from Poland and Palestine.

* * *

(more)

South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu today stressed the importance of freedom, democracy and their impact on the quality of children's lives. He was speaking at a Headquarters press conference to mark the fourth Day of the African Child. Noting President Nelson Mandela's plans for free health care for children under six and expectant mothers, Archbishop Tutu said that prior to the end of apartheid, the health of children in South Africa had been at grave risk. He stressed the need for similar benefits for children in other parts of Africa.

Archbishop Tutu also called for the demilitarization of Africa. He said in many countries armies had been used against their own citizens to uphold dictatorial regimes. They represented powerful elites and "gobbled up" resources that could be used to provide water, schools, homes and ensure children had primary health care.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) proclaimed 16 June as the Day of the African Child to mark the 1976 massacre of children in Soweto and to focus world attention on the progress made for children by African countries and the challenges still facing them.

* * *

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) cancelled cease-fire talks scheduled for today as mortar and small arms fire continued in and around Kigali, according to a spokesman for the Organization. The UNAMIR Deputy Force Commander met with Rwandan Government forces to discuss the cease-fire situation and in particular the security around the airport with a view to resuming flights.

* * *

Delegations from 83 member States and four international organizations met today at International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) headquarters in Vienna to consider the final text of an International Nuclear Safety Convention. The Convention's aim is to ensure the safety of land-based civil nuclear power plants, and their storage, handling and treatment facilities for radioactive materials.

The Director-General of the IAEA, Hans Blix, told delegates that assurances of safety and the peaceful use of nuclear power were fundamental if it was to remain an attractive option for meeting the growing global demand for energy. The safe use of nuclear energy, was essentially a national responsibility. However, international efforts in the area of safety recognized the interdependence of all participants in the nuclear fuel cycle. An accident anywhere had global ramifications in terms of public confidence in nuclear power as a major energy source, the Director-General added.

* *** *

United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1668
17 June 1994

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ UNAMIR soldier killed, another seriously wounded in Rwanda; RPF forces raid Church compound in Kigali, evacuate 600 Tutsi refugees; cease-fire talks resume in capital; civilian exchanges to restart tomorrow.

+ UNHCR monitors processing of Haitians refugees aboard United States hospital ship in Jamaica; recognized refugees to go to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for resettlment in third countries; others to be returned to Haiti.

+ Secretary-General welcomes agreement signed in Oslo today between Guatamalan Government and URNG on resettlement of uprooted people, human rights, education and land tenure.

+ United Nations inter-agency humanitarian mission in Yemen reports 20,000 people displaced in Taez and Lahaj by recent conflict urgently need food and medical care.

+ International Conference on Money Laundering begins tomorrow in Italy; participants to aim for global cooperation to control circulation and investment of funds by criminal organizations.

* * *

A United Nations military observer from Uruguay was killed and another officer from Bangladesh was critically wounded today, when their two-vehicle convoy was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade about 25 miles north of Kigali. A Canadian plane evacuated the injured soldier and the dead man's body, a spokesman for the Organization said. The two soldiers were part of a team of military observers attempting to reach Gisenyi, where members of the Rwandan interim government had reportedly taken refuge following the fall of Giterama to the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) forces this week.

Last night, RPF forces launched a raid on the Sainte Famille Church compound, where 60 young boys were abducted by militia earlier this week.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

After some shelling, 600 predominantly Tutsi refugees were escorted from the Government controlled compound into RPF territory. Casualties were reportedly high, the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, cease-fire talks resummed this morning in Kigali without noticeable progress, the spokesman said. The exchange of civilian refugees is scheduled to begin again tomorrow, and flights into the country are planned to resume on Monday. Ten armoured personnel carriers will be brought into Kigali from Somali beginning this weekend and, as soon as possible, additional troops will arrive in Rwanda as part of the expanded UNAMIR mandate.

* * *

The process of determining the status of Haitians found at sea has begun on board United States boats in Jamaica, according to a spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Yesterday, the United States Coast Guard took 35 Haitians on board an enormous hospital ship, the USS Comfort, which is docked in Kingston. The Haitians were found in three separate boats and included 31 men, three women, two of whom were pregnant, and one child. The group had spent about 8 days at sea.

A UNHCR representative was present during the process and the agency has interpreters and 12 lawyers on board the Comfort who have full access to the Haitian refugees. The UNHCR spokeswoman said although the proceedings went well, large numbers of refugees would be better processed on land, and negotiations on that subject were currently under way with the Turks and Caicos Islands. Haitians recognized as refugees would be taken to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and then resettled in third countries. Those whose applications were not granted would be sent back to Haiti, the spokeswoman added.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has welcomed the agreement signed in Oslo today by the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaría Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) on the resettlement of people uprooted by the 30-year conflict in their country. It will come into force with the final signing of a comprehensive peace agreement between the Government and the URNG scheduled for the end of the year, and concludes a month of intense United Nations supervised negotiations in Mexico and Norway.

The Agreement outlines a comprehensive strategy for the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, as well as guarantees relating to human rights, safety, education, legal land tenure and reintegration. The parties will soon begin discussions on the next item on the negotiating agenda -- the identity and rights of indigenous people.

Representatives from donor countries, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank met this week in Paris to facilitate financial support for the Guatemala peace process. Norway will make $1 million available towards the financing of the Guatemalan resettlement.

* * *

A United Nations inter-agency humanitarian mission in Yemen has reported 20,000 people have been displaced in the provinces of Taez and Lahaj as a result of the recent conflict there. Most of the displaced persons have found accommodation with relatives and friends or in facilities provided by local social services and voluntary organizations. However, they are in urgent need of food and medical care, a spokesman for the Organization said today.

The mission reports Lahaj's health system has deteriorated considerably following the confiscation and destruction of medical equipment, and the flight of health professionals. Officials fear malnutrition and disease outbreaks due to the lack of clean drinking water, but report little damage to the water supply and sanitation infrastructure which is inoperable because of electricity failures. The Mission was made up of representatives from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

* * *

The International Conference on Preventing and Controlling Money Laundering and the Use and Proceeds of Crime, will begin tomorrow in Courmayeur, Italy. The three-day conference will be attended by representatives from governments, international financial institutions, criminology institutes and United Nations agencies. It is taking place amidst a growing awareness that effective measures to combat money laundering were essential in the world-wide struggle against organized crime.

Participants are expected to review the mounting problems created by the accumulation, circulation and investment of criminal funds. They will also evaluate regulations, procedures and criminal penalties with a view to enlisting countries in a global effort to combat money laundering as a crime in itself. Cooperation between Parliaments, criminal justice and financial regulatory agencies will be needed to curb the international transfer of funds by criminal organizations.

The Conference is taking place under the auspices of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch. It will consider such questions as global trends in money laundering, including opportunities in developing countries and countries in transition, international control mechanisms, and technical cooperation.

* *** *

United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1669
20 June 1994

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security-Council extends UNOMUR mandate for final three months; military observers to be phased out gradually; stresses need for strict monitoring of arms embargo to Rwanda and importance of continued cooperation between UNOMUR and Ugandan authorities.

+ Secretary-General recommends mandate of United Nations officials in Tajikistan be extended till end of September; will extend mandate of Special Envoy there; notes progress in political dialogue between Tajik parties.

+ Prime Minister designate of Rwanda says implementation of Arusha Peace Agreement only way to solve crisis in his country; warns hostilities there could spread to region.

+ Fighting breaks out in Bosnia and Herzegovina over weekend in violation of one month cease-fire agreement.

* * *

The Security-Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR) until 21 September when it will be closed down. During that period the number of military observers will be gradually reduced. In unanimously adopting resolution 928 (1994), the Council welcomed the extension in May of UNOMUR's observation and monitoring activities along the entire Ugandan-Rwanda border. It said the arms flow into Rwanda was one of the major concerns in the cease-fire talks currently being held under the auspices of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR). Expressing its appreciation to the Ugandan Government for its support of UNOMUR, the Council stressed the need for the strict observance and monitoring of the arms embargo to Rwanda and the importance of continued cooperation between UNOMUR and the Ugandan authorities.

In his report to the Council, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Boutros Ghali noted the success of UNOMUR's mandate and said clandestine cross-border traffic between Rwanda and Uganda had decreased. The Mission had not detected significant arms shipments or the movement of armed personnel despite the

(more)

For information media--not an official record

dramatic increase in hostilities in Rwanda since April. UNOMUR was established by the Security Council last year to verify that no military assistance reached Rwanda across the Ugandan border.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the mandate of a small group of United Nations Observer officials in Tajikistan be extended until the end of September. In a report to the Security Council dated 16 June, the Secretary-General noted the progress made in establishing a political dialogue between the Tajik parties and said he would also extend the mandate of his Special Envoy, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, for the same period. The officials would support the activities of the Special Envoy, assess the military and security situation in the country, and facilitate humanitarian assistance. They would also coordinate the mission of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Tajikistan, and monitor the human rights situation there.

The Secretary-General said recent efforts by Mr. Priz-Ballon in Tehran and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Marrack Goulding, in Dushanbe had cleared the way for the second round of inter-Tajik talks, scheduled for 18 June. The talks were aimed at achieving an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, which would confirm that a viable national reconciliation process was underway. In that case, the Secretary-General said he would recommed that the Security Council respond positively to any reasonable request by the Tajik parties for international monitoring mechanisms.

* * *

Military observers with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) have reported fighting broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina, over the weekend. There were heavy exchanges of fire along a wide front in north-eastern Bosnia, according to United Nations radio reports in Zagreb. The exchanges continued in the Posavina Corridor area, with heavy fighting on Saturday and slightly less activity yesterday. The weapons used ranged from small arms to heavy artillery.

Both sides seemed to fire at each other, however there were no indications of infantry attacks, according to an UNPROFOR spokesman. The exchange in north-east Bosnia-Herzegovina was a clear violation of the one month cease-fire agreement, negotiated in Geneva by the Secretary-General's Special Representative Yasushi Akashi.

* * *

The Prime Minister designate of the broad-based Rwandan government, Faustine Twagiramungu, today called for the impelemtation of the Arusha Peace Agreement in his country. That agreement was negotiated last August by the interim Government and all political parties in Rwanda. Mr. Twagiramungu told correspondents at Headquarters that the Agreement contained the most important

(more)

elements needed for peace in Rwanda. He said it was very unfortunate that delaying manoeuvres and press manipulation had been used by the Government which was currently in place and by extremists in the army.

Mr. Twagiramungu said that the Arusha agreements had not been implemented because most of the people in authority did not want power sharing or democracy in Rwanda. The only way to end the crisis there was to observe relevant United Nations resolutions, not through unilateral means or by bringing in other countries who had been previously involved in the conflict. He stressed that such actions could complicate the current situation in his country and there was a danger hostilities could lead to a regional conflict.

* *** *